

# Putting Prevention to Work in Kitsap and Pierce Counties

Chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and lung disease are the leading causes of death in Washington State. These diseases are often preventable. Being physically active, eating healthy foods, and not using tobacco reduces the likelihood of getting one of these diseases. Healthy environments give Washington residents the opportunity to make healthy choices.

**In March 2010, Communities Putting Prevention to Work provided federal stimulus dollars to make changes that would encourage people to eat healthier, get more physical activity, and stop using tobacco. These are examples of how stimulus funds changed communities in Kitsap and Pierce counties.**

## KITSAP

### **Of adults currently smoking in Kitsap County, 56 percent want to quit.<sup>1</sup>**

Quitting smoking is hard enough. It is even more difficult for people struggling with a mental illness. Clients at Kitsap Mental Health Services face such issues. Kitsap Mental Health Services provides mental and behavioral health care services to children, families, adults, and seniors in Kitsap County. Until recently, clients using tobacco had limited support to quit.

#### **Giving clients the support to quit**

Staff from Kitsap Mental Health Services attended a statewide workshop about implementing tobacco cessation strategies at mental health treatment centers. This led to an expanded tobacco cessation program.

- Staff began addressing smoking with clients at intake sessions.
- Providers started tracking cessation strategies in client medical records.
- Special meters were shared with clients to record the impact of stopping smoking on their oxygen levels.

#### **Impact**

The smoking cessation efforts of Kitsap Mental Health Services are estimated to affect 4,000 adults and 2,000 children each year.

## PIERCE

### **48 percent of kids in Pierce County don't get enough physical activity.<sup>2</sup>**

Walking or biking to school is one way for students to get moving and to establish lifelong patterns of physical activity. The 400 students at McCarver Elementary School in downtown Tacoma faced a number of safety concerns getting to and from school. Since many parents felt it was unsafe for their kids to walk or bike in this high crime area, they drove them to school instead.

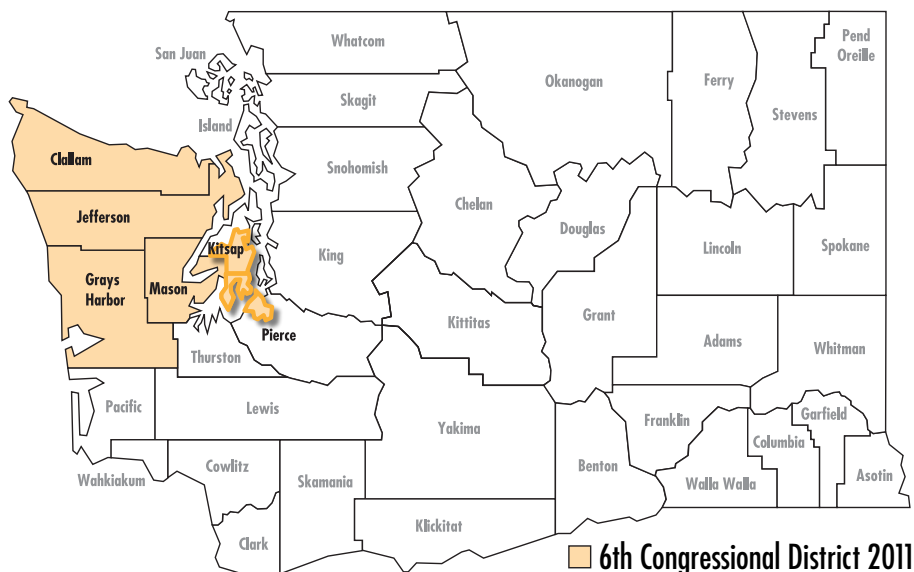
#### **Creating safer options for kids to walk and bike**

Working with Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, McCarver staff applied for stimulus funds to help their students walk and bike to school.

- They conducted an "audit" of neighborhood walking routes. This helped identify safer routes for kids to walk to school.
- They also started a "walking school bus" where parents and school staff walked with students to and from school.

#### **Impact**

Because of their success, McCarver Elementary School recently received additional public health funding to expand their walking school bus and promote healthy eating.



#### **Data sources:**

<sup>1</sup> Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, 2008–2010

<sup>2</sup> Data for 6th grade students, Healthy Youth Survey, 2010